

Information for patients having a Gastroscopy.

What is a Gastroscopy?

This is an investigation that allows the Endoscopist to look directly at the lining of the oesophagus (gullet), stomach and small intestine (duodenum). This is the upper part of your digestive system.

The procedure involves swallowing a thin flexible tube, which is less than half an inch in diameter. This tube is then introduced along your gastrointestinal tract as far as the small intestine (duodenum). The gastroscope is filled with optic fibres, through which a bright light shines, and this enables the Endoscopist to see the lining of the digestive system and to check whether disease or inflammation is present. A television system is connected to the gastroscope and a video recording and/or photographs may be taken for your records or for training and audit purposes.

During the investigation, if any areas with inflammation (redness) are visible, the Endoscopist may find it necessary to take one or more tiny pieces of tissue (biopsies) from the lining of the digestive system, and these are then sent off for laboratory examination. This is quite painless and is done by passing very small forceps through the centre of the tube. Sometimes the Endoscopist may encounter a problem, which can be effectively treated at the same time. In such cases, unless you indicate otherwise when giving consent, the problem will be treated.

A trained Doctor or Clinical Endoscopist will carry out the investigation and it can be performed with or without sedation.

Why do I need to have a Gastroscopy?

You have been advised to have this investigation of the gullet, stomach and small intestine to help your doctor find the cause of your symptoms and in order to arrange treatment or medication accordingly.

There are many reasons for this investigation including:

- If you have abdominal pain
- To investigate loss of weight and appetite
- To investigate vomiting
- To take a biopsy sample of the lining of the gullet, stomach or small intestine
- To investigate anaemia

Risks

For most people, gastroscopy is a safe procedure, however there are some potential risks and complications which may occur. The main risks are related to sedation, usually in people who have a history of breathing problems.

In order to reduce these risks all patients are monitored very closely throughout the procedure. Sometimes extra precautions are taken, such as using very small levels of sedative, heart monitoring and observation of blood oxygen levels.

Many patients choose to have their procedure without any sedation, however this is a personal choice and you may wish to have sedation to help you relax.

Gastroscopy carries a small risk of damage (bleeding or perforation) to the lining of the gullet, stomach or small intestine, which may need to be repaired by surgical operation. The risk is approximately 1 in 10,000 people.

What are the alternatives to having a Gastroscopy?

Gastroscopy is difficult for some people and some health issues mean it may not be possible. If this is the case for you, we may offer you an alternative test called a barium meal. This test is not as accurate as a gastroscopy, and a gastroscopy may still be needed after the barium test has been done.

Preparing for the investigation

- On the day of your procedure, please wear comfortable clothing
- If you use inhalers or angina sprays please bring them with you on the day.
- A questionnaire is sent out with the appointment letter, please complete this and bring it with you.

Do not eat 6 hours prior to your appointment time. You may drink water for up to 2 hours before the procedure.

What about my medication?

If you are on blood thinning drugs e.g. Warfarin, Rivaroxaban (Xaralto), Dabigatran (Pradaxa), Apixaban (Eliquis), Edoxaban (Lixiana), Clopidogrel (Plavix), Dipyridamole (Persantin, Asasantin), Prasugrel (Brilique), Ticagrelor (Efient) please contact the endoscopy unit for further information, as you may need to stop taking them days before your gastroscopy appointment.

If you are taking iron tablets, such as Ferrous Sulphate or Ferrograd do not take them on the day of your Gastroscopy.

If you take Epilepsy or anticonvulsant medication, please continue to take your antiepileptic medication as prescribed.

Any other routine medication should be taken as normal. Please bring any medication you are taking with you.

Diabetes

If you are diabetic please contact the Endoscopy Unit for further advice regarding fasting and your medication. If you are taking insulin you should have been allocated an appointment time at the start of the list i.e. 8.15 am or 1.15 pm. Please bring any insulin or diabetic medication with you.

Consent

You will be asked to sign a consent form before the procedure if you agree to go ahead. This is a legal document which states that you understand what the procedure entails, its benefits and any risks involved and that you agree to go ahead with the procedure.

What will happen at my appointment?

When you arrive in the department please report to Reception. You will then be asked to take a seat in the reception area. Due to capacity in the reception area your relative/friend may not be able to wait with you.

You should expect to be at the department for approximately 2–4 hours. Occasionally due to emergencies, the waiting time may be longer. We will however endeavour to see you as quickly as possible.

A nurse will then take you to a consultation room and carry out some pre-procedural checks with you. The nurse will explain the procedure and confirm your consent with you. You will be given the opportunity to discuss any concerns or questions.

There are a number of different procedure rooms therefore it may seem that patients are seen out of appointment order. If you have any concerns over the length of time you are waiting please bring them to the attention of a member of staff.

Will I find the procedure uncomfortable?

This is not a painful procedure and the tube does not interfere with your breathing however you may experience some discomfort.

Sedation

If you feel that you require a sedative for your procedure this will be injected into your vein through a cannula. The purpose of sedation is to make you drowsy and more relaxed. This is known as 'conscious sedation'. It is not an anaesthetic and will not make you unconscious; you will still be able to communicate with the staff looking after you. Occasionally sedation can also affect your memory of the procedure. When the procedure has ended, you will be taken to the recovery area for approximately 30 minutes.

If you have been given sedation, you will not be allowed to drive home, and you will be asked to give the name and number of someone who can collect you. You may

experience lapses of memory or feel drowsy over the next 24 hours. You will need to arrange for someone to stay with you for 12 hours following the procedure.

If you prefer, it is possible to have the procedure without a sedative drug. You will remain alert during the examination.

What happens during the procedure?

When it is your turn for your Gastroscopy a nurse will take you into the procedure room and stay with you throughout the test. On arrival in the procedure room, the back of your throat will be sprayed with local anaesthetic, which will help you to swallow the tube. For your comfort and reassurance, a nurse will be with you throughout the procedure. In the procedure room you will be made comfortable on a trolley lying on your left side. A blood pressure cuff may be placed around your arm and a 'peg' will be placed on your finger to monitor your pulse and oxygen levels. If you have requested sedation this will be given before the procedure starts.

The endoscope (a soft bendable tube) is passed gently into your mouth, to the back of your throat and round into your gullet. The tube is then passed slowly into the stomach and the small intestine. Air is blown gently through the endoscope to allow the endoscopist to see the lining of the gullet, stomach and small intestine. The air may make you feel a little bloated.

After the Procedure

The procedure takes about 10 minutes; you will be taken to a recovery area and allowed to rest as long as necessary. Your blood pressure and heart rate may be monitored and once you are recovered you will be given a drink and snack. The back of your throat may feel sore for as short while and you may feel a discomfort in your stomach. This is quite normal and settles quickly.

The nurse will provide written and verbal information about the results of your investigation, recovering at home, and arrange any follow-up appointments (if required) before you are discharged. If you would like to be accompanied by a friend or relative during your discharge please inform the nurse.

A letter will be sent to your GP informing him/her of the results of your Gastroscopy and any medication you have been prescribed or that is recommended. If biopsy samples have been taken, the results are sent to your GP.

If you have been given sedation, you will not be allowed to drive home, and will need someone to collect you. You may experience lapses of memory or feel drowsy over the next 12 hours, you must arrange for someone to stay with you during this time. You should not drive a car, operate machinery, sign legal documents or drink alcohol for 24 hours after the gastroscopy. Most patients are able to resume normal activities the next day.

About the Endoscopy Unit

The Endoscopy Unit is situated on the first floor, E Block, access is gained from the ground floor lift/staircase via the main entrance to the Hospital.

There is a reception area however, due to capacity relatives/friends may be asked to leave the unit and return when you are ready to be collected.

Please do not bring large sums of money or valuables into the Hospital. Although every care is taken to prevent any loss or damage, we cannot accept responsibility for the loss of patients' property.

If there is anything you wish to discuss prior to your procedure or if you have any further questions then please do not hesitate to contact us on one of the appropriate numbers below:

**For appointments please contact the Endoscopy booking team on:
01204 390273 –Mon- Fri 8 am-7pm Sat & Sun 8 am-6pm**

**For Procedure/ Medication advice please contact the Endoscopy nurses on:
01204 390648- Monday- Sunday 8am -6pm.**

We recognise that not everyone will find this document easy to read. We can arrange for large print, audio tape versions and for summaries or explanations in other languages, please call 01204 390193 if we can help.

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